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Anglo-American Congregation

1877

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN CONGREGATION, BEYROUT, SYRIA.

WITH AN ABSTRACT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BUILDING FUND FOR THE NEW CHURCH, AND A LIST OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM STRANGERS AND FROM ABROAD.

PREPARED BY THE PASTOR'S COMMITTEE AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONGREGATION.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

ANGLO-AMERICAN PROTESTANT CONGREGATION

BEYROUT, SYRIA.

The Anglo-American Congregation, which now worships in the church of which a woodcut is annexed, had its origin immediately after the arrival of the Revd. Messrs. William Goodell and Isaac Bird, Missionaries to Syria of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, who landed at Beyrout on the 16th. of November 1823, and were cordially welcomed and temporarily entertained by Mr. Peter Abbott, then H. B. M's Consul for St. Jean d'Acre, Beyrout, and Dependencies.

At its first meeting for worship the Congregation probably consisted of Mr. Consul Abbott, his wife and daughter, his nephews Messrs. Gabriel and Jasper Chasseaud, Mr. and Mrs. Goodell, and Mr. and Mrs. Bird.

During the lifetime of Mr. Abbott the service was held in his house, and was conducted by one of the Missionaries. For some time the prayer-book of the Church of England was used for the devotional part of the service, but the Presbyterian form was eventually adopted as the rule, the Episcopalian

form being reverted to as an exceptioa on particular occa sions.

On the death of Mr. Abbott, in the year 1834, the place of meeting for worship was changed to the house of Mr Jasper Chasseaud, who had been appointed United States Consul for Syria; and the service continued to be held in his house till the year 1841. Here it was that a pulpit, the gift of the young men of the Congregation, was first provided for the use of the preacher. It was rather a rude structure, the handiwork of a Moslem carpenter, made light enough to be stowed away in a closet during the week, bnt it answered the purpose, and now answers a similar purpose in the native Chnrch at Merj Ayûn.

By that time the American Missionaries had found it necessary to set apart two rooms in the dwelling house of one of them, (that which is now the Armenian Convent,) for the accommodation of the attendants at their service in Arabic, one room being for the men, and the other for the women, with a reading desk placed in au opening in the partition wall betwixt the two. By that time also dwelling houses outside the walls of the city had begun to be multiplied, and it was found more convenient that the service in English should be held in the same place as that in Arabic, one of the rooms being large enough for the purpose, and in it the primitive pulpit was placed.

In the year 1843 the London Jewish Missionary Society sent to Beyrout the Revd. Horace Winbolt, to act in the double capacity of British Chaplain and Missionary to the Jews. A chapel was fitted up in an outer room of his house; and as the two morning services were held at the same hour, and the Episcopalians naturally preferred to worship in their own form, a separation took place which continued until the year 1849, when, in consequence of ill health, Mr. Winbolt returned to England where he survived only a short time. His place was not refilled, and thus the congregation again became a unit.

In the year 1845 the Presbyterian section, together with the native congregation, removed to the American Mission House, occupying at first one, afterwards two, and eventually three of the vaulted rooms on the ground-floor, to meet the growing wants of the native congregation. A more becoming pulpit was imported from the United States, and pews were substituted for chairs and forms; and there the two Congrgations continued to worship until their final removal to the present edifice.

The service had thus been maintained for forty years * by the voluntary efforts of the American Missionaries, often at no small tax upon their physical strength, when, in the year 1864, the Jewish Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, after a preliminary understanding between a deputy sent for the purpose and the American Missionaries of the Beyrout station, entered into an arrangement with theAmerican Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions by which the charge of the Sabbath service in English was transferred to the Scottish Mission; and the Revd. James Robertson, the present pastor, entered upon his duties in the autumn of that year.

At a meeting of the Anglo-American Congregation, held on Jany 25th. 1866,"to consider the ways and means necessary to build a church," after a statement by the Pastor of the intentions of the American Board and of the Committee of the Church of Scotland on the subject, a Committee was appointed to carry the object of the meeting into execution; and at a subsequent meeting this Committee adopted the following

STATEMENT AND APPEAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS.

'The apartment in the Mission House of the A. B. C. F. M., 'in which for many years divine services have been maintain-

* During one year only the Congregation engaged the Rev. Samuel Healy, an English Methodist, to supply the pulpit when required by the Missionaries to do so.

'ed in the Arabic and English languages, for the benefit of the 'Arab congregation, and of English and American residents 'and travellers, had already become too small for the accom- 'modation of the native congregation, and has been assigned 'by the American Board to form a part of the Native Female 'Seminary now in course of erection.

'To provide another place of worship for the native congre- 'gation the Board has set apart a convenient site on the Mis- 'sion property, and has besides made a grant of money, on 'condition that the native congregation contribute according 'to its ability towards the erection of a new edifice. The Church 'of Scotland Mission, which has for about a year had the use 'of the present chapel for the service in English, is also to con- 'tribute towards the building.

'The Anglo-American Congregation, glad of an opportunity 'to show their appreciation of the pastoral services of the Mis- 'sionaries for so many years, and of the free use of the chapel, 'and desirous that the union hitherto subsisting should be main- 'tained, have therefore cordially agreed to co-operate with the 'American and Scotch Missions, and with the Native Protes- 'tant Community, by making and soliciting contributions in 'aid of the building fund, in order that the plan for the new 'edifice may be modified to suit the wants of both congrega- 'tions, and to be more in harmony with the general improve- 'ments of the city.

'The cost of such a building has been estimated at £ 2000. 'Of this sum about the half will be contributed by the Ameri- 'can and Scotch Missions and the Native Congregation; and to 'aid in providing the remainder contributions are earnestly so- 'licited from the friends of Protestant Missions in Syria. The 'appeal for help from abroad is the more reasonable consider- 'ing that, during a part of the year, no small proportion of the 'attendance at the service in English consists of travellers and 'temporary residents.

'Contributions may be sent to the British or American Con-'sulate, to the Imperial Ottoman Bank, or to any member of 'the Committee whose names are subjoined.

'*Beirût, February*, 1866.

'COMMITTEE.

'Rev. James Robertson, Chairman.

'James Black, Treasurer. W. F. Goodwin, Secretary.

'Rev. W. M. Thomson, D. D.	Rev. C. V. A. Van Dyck, M. D.
'J. Aug. Johnson. U. S. Consul.	Rev. H. H. Jessup. D. D.
'Henry Heald.	F. H. Smith.
'R. Somerville.	A. Walker.
'R. G. Barclay, M. D.	H. Whittington.
'Edward A. Van Dyck.	Henry E. Thomson.'

This appeal was generously responded to, as will be seen by the abstract recorded in the appendix, and the foundations of the new church were commenced on April 1st. 1867. The Corner stone was laid on June 5th. of the same year, and Mrs. Dr. Thomson, being the oldest member of the Anglo-American Congregation, and having also, as Mrs. Abbott, been present at the first meeting for worship before mentioned, was appropriately selected to lay the stone. In it was imbedded a leaden box containing the following articles:-

A copy of the Scriptures in Arabic.

Constitution of the Evangelical native Church in Syria.

List of Church members in the Arabic Evangelical Church Beyrout, from its commencement.

Photograph of the Rev. Dr. Jessup, Acting Pastor of the Arabic Congregation.

Photograph of the Rev. James Robertson, Pastor of the Anglo-American Congregation.

List of Protestant Institutions at Beyrout.

List of Publications issued by the American Printing Press, Beyrout.

Constitution of the Syrian Protestant College, Beyrout.

Copy of the Arabic Journal of Beyrout.

Copy of the Arabic Journal of B'teddin.

Within two years the new church, although still very incomplete, particularly in its interior fittings, was sufficiently advanced to be available for worship; and as the old premises had already been incorporated into the Female Seminary, and were urgently needed for their new purpose, the old pews were moved into the new church, which was solemnly dedicated by a service in English on Saturday evening the 27th. March 1869. The Rev. Dr. Thomson, Senior member of the American Mission offered the dedicatory prayer; Mr. Robertson delivered an address; and the Rev. Mr. Wright of the Irish Mission at Damascus also took part in the services. A similar dedication service in Arabic was held the next morning, which was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Van Dyck and Rev. Dr. H. H. Jessup, of the American Mission, and the Rev. Dr. Wortabet, of the Syrian Protestant College.

In the course of the three years which have elapsed since its dedication, the church has been gradually approaching completion, according as the receipt of funds has enabled the Building Committee to prosecute the work; but additions have still to be made to the interior fittings, and the grounds are yet imperfectly laid out. Meanwhile it is felt that appropriate acknowledgment of the liberal aid in the work received from passing strangers and from abroad, ought not to be longer withheld: considering that such aid has enabled the Committee not only to provide accomodation for the present wants of the native Congregation, with some reserve for future increase, but at the same time to erect an edifice in a style of

architecture consistent with the growing influence of Protestantism in Syria, and with the advance of the modern city.

The new church occupies a central and commanding position, affording from the top of the tower a charming panoramic view of the city and its picturesque suburbs. Its dimensions are 75 feet in length by 50 feet in width, the tower being 15 feet square at the base and 81 feet high; and at the south end is an addition 16 + 25 feet consisting of the vestry and other accessories. The work has almost all been executed by native workmen under the direction of Europeans connected with the Anglo-American Congregation; and the Committee have satisfaction in stating that no part of the money has been expended for plans or for professional assistance. *

It will interest Contributors and others to learn, by way of conclusion to this brief sketch, that, while the new Church is the exclusive property of the Presbyterian Board of Missions of the United States, the use of it is secured to the Jewish Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, according to the agreement before alluded to, for the regular Sabbath morning Service, and for such other services in English as do not interfere with the Arabic services; that, as the Anglo-American Congregation is composed of members of various evangelical denominations, the modes of conducting public worship, and of administering the affairs of the Church have always been, and continue to be, maintained free from sectarian exclusivness, the ministers of all evangelical Churches being invited to officiate when occasion offers, and members of all such Churches being cordially invited to unite in the celebration of the Lord's Supper; and finally, that to the blessing of God

* A plan gratuitously furnished by Mr. D. Burgess of New-York, although not adopted, was found exceedingly useful for many details.

The building seen to the left in the woodcut is the Mission Press, including a Bible Depository recently erected at the expense of the American and the Britsh and Foreign Bible Societies, and the American Prsbyterian Board of Missions, at the suggestion and with the liberal assistance of Mr. Booth of New-York.

ABSTRACT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BUILDING FUND.

Sources of Contributions	To the General Fund		For the Tower		For the Pulpit		For the Organ		For Lights		For the Inclosure		Totals	
The American Board of Missions. .	25,245	,,	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	25,245	,,
The Church of Scotland Mission. .	63,199	15	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	63,199	15
The Anglo-American Congregation.	72,481	25	20,280	20	.	.	.	.	.	.	6,400	,,	99,162	5
The Native Congregation . . .	12,456	25	1,674	5	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	14,130	30
The Prussian Congregation. . .	.	.	1,516	20	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1,516	20
Ladies of the Anglo-American Congregation.	.	.	.	.	6,768	30	.	.	.	.	.	.	6,768	30
Native Protestant Female Seminary	.	.	.	.	2,000	,,	.	.	.	.	.	.	2,000	,,
Boarders & Orphans Pruss. Diaconess. Institute.	.	.	.	.	600	,,	.	.	.	.	.	.	600	,,
Resident & Native Non-Protestants.	.	.	3,513	5	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3,513	5
Mr. J. Abcarius, Beyrout	.	.	.	.	.	.	10,000	,,	.	.	5,000	,,	15,000	,,
Missions & Local Contributions.	173,382	25	26,984	10	9,368	30	10,000	,,	.	.	11,400	,,	231,135	25
Strangers, & from abroad, in money pr. list. *	141,213	5	10,050	,,	.	.	.	.	2,500	,,	.	.	158,763	5
Proceeds of photographs of the Church	445	25	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	445	25
Interest	3,566	20	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3,566	20
Piasters	318,607	35	37,034	10	9,638	30	10,000	,,	2,500	,,	11,400	,,	388,910	35

* not including the value of the Clock & Bell, for which see list.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM STRANGERS AND FROM ABROAD.

Names & domicile of Donors	Amount in Foreign money	Amount in Beyrout currency	
Anonymous, per Dr. Brigstocke.	£ . 10.	63	5
— do —, ,, Dr. Jessup.	Fr. 20.	100	,,
— do —, ,, Mr. Somerville.	£ 1.10.0	189	15
Black, Mr. & Mrs. W., Manchester.	50. 0.0	6,312	20
Blair. George B. Manchester. Collected as under.	20. 0.0	2,512	25
George Barbour Esq., Manchester £5.–			
William Thorburn Esq., —do.— 2.–			
Thomas Aitkin Esq., —do.— 2.–			
John A. Beith Esq., —do.— 1.–			
George B. Blair Esq., —do.— 10.–			
£20.–			
Booth. W. A. Esq., New-York	Fr. 1500.	7,500	,,
Booth. Mrs W. A., — do.—, for lights.	500.	2,500	,,
Brown. James. Esq. — do. — $ 50 } Brown. John Crosby, Esq. do. – $ 50 }	£ 17. 0.7	2,150	,,
Church. F. E. Esq., — do. —	Fr. 200.	1,000	,,
Collection-box in Chapel, at various times.	. . .	334	,,
Eddy. Rev. W. W. Sidon.	£ 5. 0.0	631	10
Egleston. D. S. Esq., New-York.	Fr. 150.	750	,,
Ewerdine. John, Esq., Lonmay	£ 1. 0.0	126	10
Farnum. Henry, Esq., Chicago	100. 0.0	12,675	,,
Freemason's Lodge, Beyrout	Fr. 100.	500	,,
Hordern. W. G. Esq., from friends in England	£ 20. 0.0	2,525	,,
Hunter. Miss E. collected as under	£ 12. 10.0	1,578	5
Rev. R. T. Lancaster, Cheltenham £ 2.—			
Misses Lancaster, —do.— 3.—			
Rev. J. & Honble. Mrs. Montgomery, Edinburgh. 1.—			
Mrs. & Misses Montgomery, Edinb 2.—			
Mrs. Johnston Edinburgh. 1.—			
Mrs. Robertson, Bridge of Allen 1.—			
Miss Burnett, —do.— 1.—			
J. Cuthbert Esq., Ayr –.10			
Miss Ayton –. 5			
Smaller sums –.15			
£ 12.10			
Hunter. Mrs. & Misses, Weston-super-Mare	£ 15. 0.0	1,893	30
Jesup. Morris K., New-York	Fr. 250.	1,250	,,
Carried forward Piasters.		44,591	,,

Names & domicile of Donors	Amount in Foreign money	Amount in Beyrout currency	
Brought forward	. . P.	44,591	,,
Jones & Fox, Messrs	Fr. 100.	500	,,
Lunt.—, Esq. Cicago	100.	500	,,
Marquand. F. Esq. , New-York. . .	2000.	10,000	,,
Morse. Professor S. F. B. . . .	2500.	12,500	,,
Parker. Mrs. W. S. Brooklyn . . .	100.	500	,,
Phelps. George D, , Esq. New-York	2500.	13,331	30
Powell. David, Esq. , London . . .	£ 5. 5.0	662	30
Pye-Smith.—, Esq., Alexandria . . .	5. 0.0	631	10
Rattray. Mrs. , Karak	Fr. 40.	200	,,
R. H. L.	£ 10. 0.0	1,262	20
Robson. Rev. Smylie, Damascus . .	20. 0.0	2,525	,,
Rogers. E., T. Esq, —do.— . .	Fr. 100.	500	,,
Ship's Company of H. M. S. "Cruiser" (surplus of collection for a tombstone). .	. . .	211	10
Taylor. Miss, Bhamdûn.	£ 1. 0.0	126	10
Thaw. William, Esq., Pittsburg. Pen. .	71. 10.10	9,032	5
Thompson. W. S. Esq. , New-York. .	Fr. 1000.	5,043	30
Van Dyck. Honble. H. H.—do.— . .	£200. 10.3	25,278	30
Vermilyee. W. R. Esq.	Fr. 1000.	5,025	,,
Walne. Miss	30.	150	,,
Wellwisher.	£ . 5.0	31	20
Whillden. A, Esq., Philadelphia . .	100. 0.0	12,512	20
Whish. Miss E. E. , Cheltenham. colected as under.	10. 5.0	1,294	5
Miss Whish. . . Milford. £ 1.			
Mrs. Brigstocke. . —do.—. . .10			
Rev. F. H. J. Brigstocke 10			
Mrs. Lowman. . . Clipton . . 2.			
Miss Clunes. . . Cheltenham. . 5			
Mrs. C. B. Ker. . —do.— - .10			
Miss E. E. Whish . —do.— . 2.			
Miss Williams . . —do.— 1.			
Mrs. Lamb. . . —do.— . 1.			
Miss Brown. . . —do.— . . 5			
Mrs. Savary. . . —do.— . . 5			
Miss Crooke . . —do.— . . 5			
Mrs. Lewis. . . —do.— . . 5			
Mr. & Mrs. Sessions. —do. — . . 5			
£ 10. 5			
Caried forward Piasters		151,409	20

Names & domicile of Donors	Amount in Foreign money	Amount in Beyrout currency	
Brought forward	. . P.	151,409	20
Willats, Mrs., Cheltenham. Collected as under.	£ 3. 2.6	394	20
Mrs. Hawkshaw 10s Gen. & Mrs. Poleohele 10s. Mrs. Garstin 7s6d Mrs. Wyley 5s. Miss Douglas 5s. Miss Baillie 5s. Mrs. Venobles 5s. Rev. G. & Mrs. Chamberlain 10s. Col. Willats 5s. } £3.2.6			
Wynkoop. F. S. Esq. New-York . .	£ 15. 2.0	1,909	5
Wynne. Richard, Esq.	Fr. 10.	50	,,
Total in Money	Piasters	153,763	5

Donors to Tower Clock, value . . .	$ 1000. —
Mr. Hotchkiss, maker, in giving the clock for . . . . $ 600.–	
,, Alfred Hand, Scranton, Pa	
,, Joseph Scranton, – ,, —, ,,	
,, Charles Hebard, Williamsport, Pa	
,, Charles C. Dodge, Jersey city, N. J.	
,, Benjamin Meigs, — do. —, ,,	
,, Norman W. Dodge, New-York.	
Donors to Bell, value	$ 1200. –

Homer Morgan — B. S. Walcott
O. E. Wood — J. R. Ford
M. K. Jesup — Amos J. Dwight
F. Marquand — Thomas Dewey
Fisher Howe — F. H. Cossett
Charles E. Beebee — H. J. Morgan
Theo. Roosevelt.

all of New-York City.